Exploration of oil and gas by GSPCL

2429. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Gujarat has made a request for allocation of Blocks for exploration of Oil and Gas to the Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation Ltd. on nomination basis in the areas of Saurashtra and Kutch Regions of the State; and

(b) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP), launched in 1997, the Government of India adopted international competitive bidding system for offering acreages for exploration and production of oil and gas in the country. NELP has provided a level playing field wherein bids are invited from private and public sector companies—both Indian as well as foreign.

Even National Oil Companies, *viz.* Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), Oil India Ltd. (OIL) etc. are not awarded blocks on nomination basis as they have to compete with other private/public sector companies under NELP. Therefore, it would not be possible to allocate any block to Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation (GSPC) on nomination basis.

Sale of gas to fertilizer industry

2430. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ONGC, British Gas and Reliance Industries Consortium pumps 17 million cubic-meter per day of Gas from the Panna-Mukta-Tapti fields given to them before introduction of auctioning acreages system;

(b) if so, whether in view of this availability of Gas why fertilizer industry is being forced to meet gas shortage by using costly naphtha or LNG from spot market; and

(c) whether it is due to lack of foresight when the Ministry finalized terms and conditions while allotting Panna-Mukta-Tapti fields to this consortium?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Presently 17.3 Million Standard Cubic Meters per day (mmscmd) of natural gas is being supplied from the Panna-Mukta-Tapti (PMT) fields.

(b) and (c) The demand of natural gas in the country is more than the availability. However, priority is being given to supply of natural gas to fertilizer plants including from PMT fields.

Assured supply of oil and gas

2431. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) and Oil India Limited (OIL) are examining the possibility of joint bidding for overseas exploration blocks;

(b) whether Government would introduce a mandatory clause in such agreements that a specified quantity of crude and gas thus explored, is sold to India at a pre-agreed formula-based concessional price to meet our growing requirement of petroleum products; and